

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 - 8 (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~according to claim 8, comprising:~~

image input means for inputting image data on an original;

image process means for subjecting the image data input by the image input means to a predetermined image process;

first program storage means for storing an image process program for performing the image process to be executed by the image process means;

image output means for outputting the image data processed by the image process means;

state detection means for detecting a state of the image output means;

program input means for inputting an optimal image process program from outside, on the basis of a detection result of the state detection means;

second program storage means for storing image process programs input by the program input means; and

program loading means for reading out a desired image process program from the second program storage means on the basis of input information from outside, and loading the read-out desired image process program into the first program storage means,

wherein the program input means determines an image quality of an output image from the image output means on the basis of the detection result of the state detection means, and where the image quality of the output image has been determined to have a problem, the program input means inputs, from outside, a new image process program based on the detection result of the state detection means.

Claims 10 - 12 (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~according to claim 12,~~ comprising:

image input means for inputting image data on an original;

arithmetic means for subjecting the image data input by the image input means to a predetermined image process arithmetic operation;

first program storage means for storing an arithmetic program for performing the image process arithmetic operation to be executed by the arithmetic means;

image output means for outputting the image data processed by the arithmetic means;

second program storage means for prestoring arithmetic programs for performing the image process arithmetic operation;

characteristic amount calculation means for calculating a characteristic amount of the image data input by the image input means; and

program loading means for reading out an optimal one of the arithmetic programs from the second program storage means on the basis of input information from outside, and loading the optimal arithmetic program into the first program storage means,

wherein the characteristic amount of the image data calculated by the characteristic amount calculation means is an image density histogram.

Claims 14 - 16 (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus ~~according to claim 16,~~ comprising:

image input means with a plurality of scan modes, for inputting image data on an original according to said plurality of scan modes;

arithmetic means for subjecting the image data input by the image input means to a predetermined image process arithmetic operation;

first program storage means for storing an arithmetic program for performing the image process arithmetic operation to be executed by the arithmetic means;

image output means for outputting the image data processed by the arithmetic means;

second program storage means for prestoring arithmetic programs for performing the image process arithmetic operation; and

program loading means for reading out an optimal one of the arithmetic programs from the second program storage means in accordance with the scan mode of the image input means, and loading the optimal arithmetic program into the first program storage means,

wherein said plurality of scan modes are a pre-scan mode and a main scan mode,

wherein the program loading means has image characteristic discrimination means for discriminating a characteristic of image data input by the image input means in the pre-scan mode, and the program loading means reads out an optimal one of the arithmetic programs from the second program storage means on the basis of a discrimination result of the image characteristic discrimination means and loads the optimal arithmetic program into the first program storage means, and

wherein the image characteristic discrimination means discriminates whether the original is a character original, a character/photo original, or a photo original, on the basis of the image data input by the image input means in the pre-scan mode.

Claims 18 - 23 (Canceled)